

**Transcription of CIIR AGM  
22 October 1999**

*Paul Vallety:* Welcome to the second part of the AGM and a special welcome to our speaker Jose Ramos Horta who we got used to calling the Foreign Minister Designate. I don't know whether that's now considered presumptuous now that's so imminent. Without further ado I'll ask him to speak. He going to speak for about 40 minutes after which John Battle, who's the Minister of State for the Foreign Office will respond for 10 minutes and then I'll through the floor open for questions for 20 to 25 minutes. Jose Ramos Horta.

*Jose Ramos Horta:* First I would like to say how touched and grateful I am for the honour given to me to be here in London at the annual meeting of the Catholic Institute for International Relations. I was supposed to arriving in Dili yesterday with Xanana Gusmao. He made a point that he wanted me to be with him on his return. But I told him I had this long standing engagement with the Catholic Institute for International Relations and he said well, but you can come and leave the same day and I said after 24 years I did not think it was right for me to arrive and leave. People on the ground would find it strange. And we agreed that I would not go with him yesterday to East Timor, that I would travel to London.

In the meantime other commitments surfaced. A meeting with Mr Hubert Vedrine, the French Foreign Minister, this morning in Paris and President Kim Dae Jung also is hosting a meeting in South Korea this Monday. Xanana agreed that it was important that I remained outside for a few more days or weeks to consolidate some of the international agenda we have. Because Xanana, like everybody else in East Timor in the Resistance, we are conscious of the fact that the international solidarity movement, the citizens of the world, the international community as such, were important in the changes that have come about in East Timor. Without that international support from all over the world maybe the killings would have continued in East Timor, maybe INTERFET, the international peacekeeping, peace enforcement would not be there. And therefore Xanana told me yes, I agree, you stay out a few more weeks.

I came here with enormous satisfaction and I remember the very first time I met with someone from the Catholic Institute for International Relations was sometime in 1976 or 1977, a woman called Eileen Sudworth. One of the early persons working with the Catholic Institute. One of the very first publications on East Timor, anywhere in the world, was issued by the Catholic Institute; it's called *Comment* and you produced an issue on East Timor. I must say that I used hundreds and hundreds of copies because we didn't have any print material at the time and for many years. I used that in my work at the United Nations in New York and around the world. It was a very succinct, well-prepared document which was terribly useful at the time to educate people around the world.

Over the years the Catholic Institute for International Relations was a beacon of integrity, of ethics in the case of East Timor. For this reason, I decided that in spite of the tremendous emotional pressure to return, you know I felt, and Xanana agreed, I should come to this meeting with you people and to thank you all for the many years of support.

And as we move now towards consolidating peace and stability in East Timor, as we move towards rebuilding the country from ashes, from almost total destruction by the retreating army, we continue to have to rely on you to support us. This is the message, the appeal, from Xanana Gusmao and from the two bishops.

By mere coincidence, the day before I left I was with Xanana and the two bishops for the first time we all four were together in one place. The two bishops had just arrived in Darwin, Australia for a meeting of Caritas – Australia, and we all four met and discussed the situation in East Timor, the needs of the country. They all asked me to convey to you our most sincere gratitude to the Catholic Institute, to its membership, but also the United Kingdom and to the British Government

I want to ask the Secretary of State to once again to convey to Secretary Robin Cook and to the Prime Minister Tony Blair our gratitude for the decisive, crucial role that your government played in those very difficult weeks to get INTERFET going, to put pressure on Indonesia. Tony Blair's leadership was crucial to have Bill Clinton moving as well.

Xanana Gusmao is personally grateful for the hospitality at the British Embassy. I felt only sorry for him because I was wondering what kind of food they were giving to him at the British Embassy. I think the only punishment someone can get if you inflict on him or her British cuisine. But Xanana said no, he was being very well treated and even the wife of the British Ambassador would go there and would try to find out what he needed. She would go out to do shopping for clothing for him because when he was moved from the prison to the British Embassy he had nothing.

So we are all very grateful to the hospitality to Xanana, in those very difficult days in Jakarta, which for the British Embassy to host Xanana it meant also that it made a lot of people upset in Indonesia and made the British Embassy a possible target of demonstrations. I think some demonstrations actually took place. So the British Embassy safety was also at risk, and we thank you for that.

I tell you, I just arrived from a long trip from Darwin, and this morning, arrived last night in Paris, had a meeting this morning and took the Eurostar to London. So forgive me if my speech is not going to be terribly coherent. I will try to convey to you, to the best of my ability, some of our ideas, concerns, and vision for the future of East Timor.

Just to give you some of the daunting task we have ahead of us, I'll tell you a bit of what has been our agenda in Darwin where the whole CNRT leadership was meeting in the last few days. I personally would wake up like six in the morning to review things, to do some interviews and then would be at the meeting by eight in the morning and would return to my hotel room never before midnight, sometimes one, two in the morning.

What were the issues we were discussing? We were discussing emergency issues such as humanitarian problems in East Timor. We were discussing problems of East Timorese in West Timor and elsewhere in the region. We were discussing the reorganisation of the Resistance structures in the face of the new situation. The new role that the National Council of Timorese Resistance should take, but also we were discussing meeting with different business groups to generate interest among investors. But we were also discussing business groups that were making offers of all sorts. Meetings with the oil companies, the Timor Gap discussed with the Australian Government, regarding the Timor Gap Treaty. Discussing issues of reconciliation, the future legal system in East Timor, future government structures. And that, by a group of people that never had any experience in running a country.

My job for the past 23 years has been, more or less, sitting at a table like this or at a podium, denouncing the Indonesians, dismantling their arguments. Now we are faced with the daunting prospect of rebuilding a country, running a country. None of us have any experience, but, inspired by the courage of the people, by the determination, the resilience, and the creativity of the humblest sectors of the Timorese society. The true heroes of East Timor are the barefoot, the illiterate, the anonymous, the unknown people, not those who appear on television, but those who with courage went to register in July and August, those who with courage went to vote, and cast their vote on August 13 in spite of the threats.

With the sacrifice, inspired by their courage, committed to what we have promised for the past 23 years, we promise the people, but also promise you. We are determined not to betray the sacrifice of so many, not to betray the illusions, the hopes, the dreams, of so many in East Timor and abroad.

We will try with international help, with the United Nations, the NGOs, the international community, to build a country, a society that is worth these 23 years of resistance, 23 years of sacrifice, at the cost of so many thousands of lives. The United Nations has announced a plan of transition authority to be established in East Timor. It will be a UN-led administration in East Timor that will, with us, govern the territory for the next two, three years and prepare East Timor for statehood.

In our numerous discussions in New York with the Secretary General himself, Mr Kofi Annan, with various other interlocutors at the UN, in Washington, here in London with Prime Minister Tony Blair and Secretary Robin Cook, and elsewhere around the world, we have always conveyed the message that yes, we welcome the United Nations involvement in East Timor. We are the ones who have appealed to the UN to establish a transition authority in East Timor, to prepare the country gradually towards independence.

However, we also want to emphasise to the United Nations that: a) the UN has, the international community, has a unique opportunity to perform well in East Timor. The UN has a unique opportunity to succeed not only for the benefit of the people of East Timor but also for the credibility of the UN in the long run.

Too often the UN has come under criticism in so many places, as you know, and it came under severe criticism because of the violence following the ballot. But also we must say in fairness that often the UN takes the blame for the lack of action by others. When the UN fail we tend to forget that the UN fail because member states fail. Often we tend to see the Secretary General and the people around him as if disassociated from the will of the international community. Often when they fail is because the Security Council fail or because the General Assembly fail because of the conflicting interests of member states that paralyse the UN.

In the case of East Timor, we are prepared to forget all the failures, the shortcomings of many years. We are even prepared to forget, and we don't want to engage in, the wasteful exercise of finger pointing about who was responsible for the May 5<sup>th</sup> agreement and that lead to the bloodshed following the ballot. What is important is each of us, each of the members of the international community realise, remember that too many people lost their lives for a country to be independent, to be free. This is a unique opportunity for the ideals of the UN to triumph.

The UN can work with the East Timorese in building a model of a society, not a model to everyone because it might be too arrogant and presumptuous to think of a model for everyone else because we often talk about models. Well, we don't want to be a model to everyone. What we mean is a model for East Timor that works in East Timor, a model of human rights, of tolerance, of compassion, of forgiving, of reconciliation. A model of a clean government, of good governance, of accountability and transparency. A model of rule of law for East Timor. We don't want to be a model to anyone in the region, or let alone the world. And it is that model that we believe the UN can do.

We want, from the very beginning, that the United Nations not establish in East Timor an over-inflated bureaucracy. We don't want the UN to waste the resources generously put to the service of the people of East Timor by the international community. We don't want in the end in three years from now to inherit a bloated civil service. We don't want in three years from now to inherit from the UN a corrupt system. We want a lean government, transparent, with strong independent judiciary, strong accountability procedures. Because if the lessons of economic and financial crisis in East Asia are of any value to anyone, our humble opinion is that if we are to avoid the economic and financial crisis of the region that has destroyed so many incomes of the poorest in the region. If we are to avoid so much waste of the resources of the country, we must have rule of law; we must have accountability, transparency. There has to be a strong independent media. In one word, we must have true democracy.

Democracy might not resolve all the problems of the world. Democracy might not resolve the problems of underdevelopment but there is no way around it. Democracy, at least, is one effective way to avoid the waste, corruption, greed, nepotism that brought down the castle of cards that was the, so-called, East Asian economic tiger economies.

We will not, like some of our neighbours, always find enemies outside. We will not find a scapegoat to blame for the economic and financial crisis of the region. If you ask a Prime minister of the region he would say the economic and financial crisis in East Asia is due to George Soros, to money speculators. Maybe partly so. But we would prefer to say that each of us in our region of the world, in South-east Asia, in East Asia, and particularly in East Timor, must always be humble enough, that when we are confronted with a problem, we must first examine our own practices, and examine our own responsibilities before start blaming outsiders.

For that to happen there has to be a real strong system of government with check and balance. For a system of government with check and balance to occur we have to develop strongly supported development of a strong civil society. In that regard, NGOs have a very special role to play. As NGOs were important over the past few years in support for East Timor, international NGOs will still be very important in helping developing civil society, democratic institutions in the next two, three years. The only guarantee, that when independence comes and when the UN leaves, there will be a system of government that is responsible to the needs of the people, that is true to the sacrifices made by so many people. That East Timor will not descend, after independence, into the same path that so many newly independent countries in the developing world descended to after independence.

The greatest threat to East Timor, I hope, I believe, will not come from outside but the greatest threat to peace, to security in East Timor will come from within ourselves. Whether those who will be elected to rule in the future to govern in the future, will not be tempted by

arrogance, by impunity, will not forget where they came from, will not forget the sacrifice of so many. The greatest threat to peace and stability in East Timor will come from our own practices, our own behaviour. As I have said so many times, in different circumstances, the greatest threats to many countries around the world, in fact to the world, to world peace, comes from poverty. And the way we address the issue of poverty, of inequality in East Timor, in the region, in Indonesia, and in many underdeveloping countries will bring or not peace in the future.

Sometimes when I hear about nuclear tests, nuclear explosions, in countries that can barely afford clean water for its people, in countries that can barely afford basic medical needs of their people, I ask myself what went wrong with these rulers. Don't they see that the greatest threat to peace and security in the sub-Indian continent comes from poverty and not from their respective neighbours.

We congratulate the new President of Indonesia Abdurrahman Wahid, and the new Vice President and we congratulate the Indonesian people for the tremendous struggle over the years to bring down the dictatorship and to build a new and democratic Indonesia. But democracy in Indonesia will consolidate only if they address all the issues that are a legacy of the Suharto regime. All political prisoners in Indonesia are released, that the army goes back to the barracks, that the army ends its role in politics, that the army no longer acts with impunity as it has done so for the past 30 years. Indonesia will not find peace and stability and true democracy if the overly centralised authority continue to deny the basic rights of peoples in West Papua, in Aceh, in elsewhere in Indonesia.

I say these only to respond to an issue that is often raised, discussed about the future of Indonesia. Will Indonesia hold together as we know it as the modern Republic of Indonesia? Many arguments were made in the past that if Indonesia let go East Timor the rest of Indonesia would go. I never believed in the ex-Yugoslavia scenario for Indonesia. If Indonesia wants to preserve its territorial integrity it cannot suppress East Timor. It cannot simply suppress the cultural, economic, social rights of the people of West Papua or Aceh.

Time and again, history has shown us that the use of force against a people never be a result we want. If Indonesia wants to preserve its territorial integrity, national unity it cannot use the same methods of the past – repression. The instability we see today throughout Indonesia is the result of at least 30 years of arrogance, of impunity, of looting the wealth of those islands, of those peoples.

An independent East Timor will be a responsible member of the region. We will seek to work with Indonesia, to have a special relationship between the new independent East Timor and the new Indonesia. East Timor will not be a factor of disunity or instability in Indonesia. In fact Xanana Gusmao is hoping that in the next few weeks he will be able to visit Indonesia to begin to rebuild a relationship between East Timor and Indonesia.

We will seek special relationship with countries of the region: Philippines; Thailand; Singapore; South Korea; China. But we have made it a strategic option in foreign policy, East Timor is part of the South Pacific region and we are seeking membership in the South Pacific Forum. East Timor will not be part of ASEAN. We will seek good, fraternal, special, bilateral relations with each of the ASEAN countries, Indonesia included. But when it comes to

regional membership we believe that our best interests are served by joining the South Pacific Forum.

Australia is only 50 minutes flight from Dili, Darwin. Australia has shown already that it is the most crucial force in the region. Both for security but also for economic recovery. In fact since the economic and financial crisis in the region, over a year ago, Australia is the country, among others, that have helped most the economies of the region. It is our closest neighbour. It was thanks to Australia's readiness to intervene under the mandate authority of the Security Council that violence ended there.

Flowing from that, I must say also that we are happy with the Force Command under Australian leadership of INTERFET. The Australians are doing a superb job in extremely difficult circumstances and we want Australia to retain the leadership of the peacekeeping when we move to the peacekeeping phase. I am saying this bluntly because we have been told that when the UN moves to the next phase from peace enforcement to peacekeeping it should go to an Asian leadership.

We find the whole argument about Asian leadership to be totally out of place as if to suggest that Australia is not part of the region, just because it's predominantly Anglo-Saxon. We are told that we cannot choose our neighbours. East Timor cannot move away from Indonesia geographically. Indonesia cannot move away from East Timor nor can Indonesia move away from Australia. We cannot move away from Australia. Australia is closer to East Timor than Jakarta.

We want Australian leadership to be retained in the peacekeeping phase. And when the world talks loudly about establishing a system of government in East Timor based on the respect for human rights in the future I wonder which ASEAN country can provide that guarantee. Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia has stated publicly that Malaysia should take over leadership of the peacekeeping. Well, obviously, I leave it to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, to Kofi Annan the Secretary General, because the decision belongs to the Secretary General, to sort out the seeming contradiction between a Malaysian leadership of peacekeeping in East Timor and the observance of human rights, democratic institutions in East Timor in the future. We don't want to engage anyone in such debate. We prefer to retain the situation, as it is today, Australian leadership and Thailand having the deputy command of operations in East Timor.

We have also stated that for the role of the Special Representative of the UN in East Timor, we prefer a Portuguese-speaking person whoever he is. Could be someone from Mozambique, from Angola, from Portugal, from Brazil. One non-Portuguese-speaking person who we would welcome to stay on in East Timor, as Special Representative of the Secretary General, would be Ian Martin, the Head of the United Nations Mission for East Timor. This is also to say how grateful we are to UNAMET.

In the heat of the criticisms and finger pointing about who failed, who did not fail, I must say Ian Martin, and all the people around him, did a superb job under extremely difficult circumstances. Ian Martin and the people around him earned the respect, the trust of the people of East Timor. So much so that we are saying the only person non-Portuguese speaking whom we would accept, agree and work with as Special Representative of the Secretary General to govern the territory for the next three years would be Ian Martin. But, obviously again, we don't make those decisions, we don't have the authority. We only convey

as forcefully as we can, as persuasively as we can our humble views. Doesn't sound terribly humble!

As we mentioned to Prime Minister Tony Blair, Secretary Robin Cook, I did mention to President Clinton a few weeks ago when I had the privilege of meeting him and many others in New York, East Timor is a bit like Europe after World War Two – devastated. As the Indonesian army saw the end coming, as they were withdrawing they were destroying every town possible, every building. They used flame-throwers to burn down every house, every building possible. Some of the strongest buildings, built by the Portuguese, were destroyed, like the building that housed the Central Bank, the main bank in Dili, was built by the Portuguese in the late 60s. Totally destroyed. Dili is 80 to 90 per cent destroyed. Most towns thoroughly destroyed, few escaped. The second town Baucau escaped, maybe 80 per cent saved. What we want in East Timor is going to be a sort of mini Marshall Plan.

Fortunately, when we talk of a mini Marshall Plan for East Timor it's actually mini, mini, mini Marshall Plan. So we want to tell the Minister, the Secretary of State not to be worried about the wording Marshall Plan, it's not like the Marshall Plan in Europe. The country's 90,000km<sup>2</sup>, 700-800,000 people, so we are talking about small dimensions.

As tragic as the destruction has been, maybe this is also a unique opportunity to build something totally new. We are not asking much. Our priority is food security. We don't want to make the mistakes of Jakarta, Manila or Bangkok. We want to prioritise rural development, small agricultural projects, small fishery projects, small industries. We want to support small traders.

Priority also is to rebuild the school system. There we have a daunting task. Even when it comes to language we see in most countries is a very normal thing, you just continue on with the language you have. Even on that front we have a major problem. What language? Portuguese? Bahasa-Indonesian? The main East Timorese main native language – Tetum? Or English? Or why not Mongolian language? Yes, why Indonesian not Mongolian? Or Nepalese? This is only to say that the Indonesian language was imposed in East Timor in 1975. Before 1975 not one single Timorese spoke Bahasa-Indonesian. Yes, you might argue that Portuguese was imposed there, but it has a history of 500 years there. Like Angola, like Mozambique, like Cape Verde, like Brazil. Or like Tanzania use English, or Kenya use English. Or like Senegal use French. Fortunately, or unfortunately, most ex-European colonies ended up inheriting the language of their colonisers as the official language.

The East Timorese Resistance has decided that we will reintroduce Portuguese as the official language of East Timor. It will take many years, but that is what we will do because it has been there for 500 years. Yes, spoken by a minority but we hope that it will be spoken by the majority in the years to come. But also the Tetum language will be developed as a national language. It was never a written language. We are not going to forbid the use of Bahasa. People will be free to use Bahasa if they wish. But there'll be two languages – Portuguese the official, Tetum the national language, the Council language. But also we will encourage the learning of English at a very early age. What we want is that we leave it, options to the people.

If in the next 10, 20 years, 30 years English prevail over Portuguese, well then maybe someone who is responsible for teaching Portuguese is failed. If Bahasa prevails over Tetum

then someone who is responsible for Tetum fail. My point is that we will give all the options to the people of East Timor. It will up to those who should be helping us; it will be up to those who are responsible for these projects to do their best.

We are not unaware of the geographic reality. The geographic reality means that next to us is country of more than 200 million that is Bahasa-Indonesian speaking. And next to us you have Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, all the island states, Commonwealth countries that use English. East Timor will be the only odd entity that speaks Portuguese in the region. But maybe it is that odd identity that makes it so unique in the region. Maybe that historic uniqueness will be to the benefit of the region.

What other country has that Catholic root mixed with Melanesian and Malay Polynesian, that maybe can be a bridge of dialogue between the islands to the south with ASEAN countries. What other entity in the region would be a better bridge of dialogue between the ASEAN countries, Asia and Europe?

We will continue to foster relationship with Portugal because, let me tell you, if we know something about solidarity, if we have experienced something about solidarity, we have also experienced it from the Portuguese people. Xanana Gusmao, so many times when he was in Portugal he was in tears. From the very innocent common person in the streets, to the President, to the politicians, everyone, all walks of life, came to the streets, business people. Portugal is making the strongest, the biggest commitment of any country for the reconstruction, for the future of East Timor. Therefore, as Xanana says, our relationship with Portugal will be eternal as it is with all the other Portuguese-speaking countries.

Tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Mozambique and Angola. Tens of thousands demonstrated in Brazil in solidarity with East Timor. So we will continue that special relationship with the Portuguese-speaking community and we believe that relationship will be beneficial to intercontinental regional dialogue.

Maybe the oddity of East Timor being the only tiny Portuguese-speaking country in the region will be beneficial to dialogue. Maybe we are too presumptuous thinking we can be a bridge of dialogue but we will see. With humility we will put ourselves to the service of the international community from our rich, and often dramatic, experience.

We are already beginning negotiations with the Australian government in regard to the oil and natural gas resources in the Timor Sea area. As you know, a few years ago Australia entered into a treaty with Indonesia over the exploration and exploitation of oil and natural gas in the Timor Sea area. As you know, we were all against the Timor Gap Treaty because it was signed with the wrong party. But we have stated to the Australian Government that we are prepared to honour the commitments made and in the framework of that treaty. Mining companies operating in that area should not fear an independent East Timor.

The Indonesian side has terminated its legal connection with East Timor after a vote in the Indonesian parliament a couple of days ago. The Timor Gap Treaty, as such, *ipso facto*, is non-existent, because a treaty, as you know, has to be signed, at least, by two sides. It cannot be a one person dancing act. A treaty, minimum, must have two sides. The other side, Indonesia, has ceased, is no longer has any legal claims, authority over East Timor.

The mining companies in the region need some legal protection or assurance and we are stating that we are prepared to honour all those undertakings that have cost, that have been translated into hundreds of millions of dollars of investments. Investment in gas and oil exploration is not an investment in a fast food restaurant.

It means long term, 10, 20, 30 years. It means hundreds of millions of dollars. We understand that and we are telling them to continue. In the meantime, we don't know who is going to be the legal entity to sign the treaty with Australia. Either the UN, because the UN will be the administrator of the territory or Portugal, because Portugal, nominally, is still the administrating power of East Timor. Whoever is going to sign the treaty to provide the legal framework has our support.

I guess I only end by saying I lost my watch. You know I was travelling in the plane, it was a nice expensive watch. I lost it in the plane on the way here. I usually put it in the pocket and as I took the jacket out it must have fallen out. I don't know how long I have already spoken for. I will end here not so that I don't abuse your patience. I will only want to say the following.

True to our history of struggle for the past 23 years, the struggle for democracy, for human rights, we will not betray the many years of *your* solidarity of the people of East Timor. Catholic Institute, Amnesty International and many others, human rights organisations have earned the legitimacy, the right, to be the watchdogs of human rights in East Timor in the future. We will welcome you to follow every step of our work, to assist us in making sure that whoever governs East Timor will not betray your trust and the trust of the people of East Timor.

We are going to continue the policy of dialogue with those who were on the other side of the battle of the past 23 years. In fact, in the next week or two, I personally will, mandated by Xanana, will be meeting somewhere maybe in Singapore or Hong Kong, with many pro-integration East Timorese. Those who voted the wrong way. Those who all these years supported Indonesia. East Timor is big enough to accommodate everybody and too small to dispense with the support of those who are on the other side. We will pursue the dialogue of national reconciliation based on tolerance.

Xanana Gusmao has said on a number of times we are not going to decree amnesty to anyone. Amnesty, as such, is only a political act. We cannot do it. We will not do it. Those who simply voted for autonomy with Indonesia or those who advocated integration with Indonesia politically, without resorting to violence, there is no need for an amnesty or even a reconciliation because that is not a crime. Those who committed violence, those who instigated violence, instigated hatred, they are the ones who must come forward. Not to the Resistance but to their own people in East Timor. Explain to the people what they did and ask for forgiveness. And the people of East Timor will forgive them. That's why we say no amnesty. We cannot go over the head of the people themselves.

Two days ago I was in Darwin with Xanana when we got some extraordinary news from East Timor. And the news was that a group of East Timorese militias, who took part in the most recent killings of some nuns and lay workers just two weeks ago, they surrendered themselves to the Resistance fighters, all of them. They confessed that they were ones who killed those nuns and lay workers. They said they were under alcohol and drugs given to them by the

special force Indonesian troops, confirming a long standing information we had that a lot of the militias, East Timorese militias, were operating under alcohol and drugs given to them by the special forces. They asked the villagers for forgiveness. There was not one single act of violence against them. They were accepted.

One East Timorese woman, who had been raped, she recognised the rapist among the group of militias who surrendered themselves. She stepped forward, slapped the rapist twice in the face, and that's all that happened. It tells only about the tremendous capacity of the East Timorese to forgive. Those who, for a long time, have been talking about civil war in East Timor, were all disappointed. There has not been a civil war in East Timor. There is not going to be a civil war in East Timor.

We have an extraordinary leadership in East Timor. Xanana Gusmao, the political leader, and the two Catholic bishops, Belo and Basilio do Nascimento. Under these three extraordinary people, with vision, with compassion, East Timor can heal the wounds of the past and rebuild a country in peace and prosperity.

In our meeting in Darwin, we also adopted a number of decisions. One of the decisions was the creation of a Gender Equity Commission of the Resistance. And I must say that when I was the one who put forward this motion my argument was a very basic one. There are 21 members in the highest body of the Resistance, 21. Only one woman. When we look around an East Timorese political meeting, there are many women, capable women. We must ask ourselves why women are not in the political leadership. I told my compatriots every time I go abroad, in my public lectures I always speak loudly so that anyone can hear. But when I am asked how many women are in the leadership, suddenly my voice becomes very soft and I say one. I am not making any excuses. I told my colleagues no excuses. It is an embarrassment because the women have shown throughout the years, even in our organisation, many of them are far more capable, hard working, than most of the men in the leadership. We hope that this Equity Commission will begin to redress this imbalance. Not only within the leadership, but their task, the Gender Equity Commission will also work directly with the UN to make sure that the UN itself within its own bureaucracy, its own work in East Timor, addresses this issue. Because the UN, itself, is not exactly a model of gender equity.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

*Paul Vallely:* Thank you Jose Ramos Horta for that extraordinary *tour de raison* which is such a mixture of diplomacy and candour, magnanimity and plain speaking, and touched on such a huge range of things. It was quite a daunting thing to listen to the daunting task that you have got before you.

I'd like to invite John Battle, a Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to respond. John.

*John Battle:* Hearing that I am tempted to say there's a fourth extraordinary person that ought to be added to the trio that you mentioned. The person who really has the job, and an incredible difficult job now, of being a one-person Foreign Minister-in-waiting that has to go round the whole world continuing to campaign for support, explain the history of what's happened, and set out such a lucid, an illuminating, and such a progressive agenda for the

future for East Timor. I am incredibly proud to be here tonight and thankful that you have able to come, or be it briefly to visit us and be here tonight.

One thing I want to say, I've been occasionally, on and off, to CIIR AGMs throughout the whole of the time that Indonesia actually from the first days invaded East Timor back in '76. CIIR was one of the first organisations internationally to highlight the injustices of that act, to get alongside, to be in solidarity, patiently, quietly working away before the rest of the world woke up to that fact. And I think it's a very special night tonight to see that the movement through the struggle of that story towards a now a more positive ending than I am sure we can confidently look forward to as East Timor becomes the first new independent nation of the 21st century. Setting a new tone to politics, perhaps, throughout the globe.

I was invited, when I was made Minister of State, to go to East Timor in the follow up to the ballot. The ballot was taking place and they said please go, go to East Timor to ensure that there's a ballot, the follow-up, the ballot decision, which was anticipated to be for independence, is honoured, followed through properly, and the space is created for the building of the new society.

My colleague, Tony Lloyd MP who's here in the room tonight, I know went out with the CIIR mission. During the course of that ballot the general commentary in the world media was that the ballot, contrary to popular opinion, was peaceful. It was all going to go well. But I knew that Tony and CIIR were sending back worrying messages that things were not going to be all right.

And on the days that I simply started to travel from Leeds to Jakarta, the two days that it took me to get across thereby the time I arrived in Jakarta, on the 6th of September, already the violence had broken out. I wasn't able to go to East Timor, to Dili. I was told there were no planes and the military in Jakarta told me it wasn't safe for me to land at the airport. And by the way, there was no problem of security.

I say that because on the very first night I had the great privilege to visit Xanana. I went there, to his house arrest. I've never had to get through so many lines of army, flashlights. The place was under surveillance as a prison and I was assured he was there for his own comfort and safety under house arrest. I asked the question was he free to visit me at my temporary home in the British Embassy which caused slight problems, because obviously if he was a free man he could at least travel across the city. And as a result of activity that night, he was, the next morning, delivered to the British Embassy where he asked to stay. I have to say that I shared the food with him for some days there, it wasn't that bad.

But it was a great privilege to know that the struggle of Indonesia with the support, not least of CIIR and others, that really a place, East Timor, the size of Devon, a population only slightly larger than my own city of Leeds, had really captured the moral and political attention of the world in a few short days. And actually, that did make a difference.

I don't want to speak for too long, just to, perhaps, recite two practical stories. My job was then in Jakarta. I was told to stay there by Tony Blair and Robin Cook, who was actually in East Asia, in Japan at the time and to do everything I could to lobby the President, and the Foreign Minister Alatas, the General Wiranto, anyone that I could get to, to persuade them to let the UN in to keep law and order, to get violence out of the situation.

My very first diplomatic conversation, and there's no special training to be a diplomat, I was forcibly reminded, or rather asked, what tiny island off the north-east Atlantic do you inhabit? Do you realise there are four islands among the archipelago that I'm in charge of that are larger than your little island? Remind me of the population of your little island because I rather think that I pay more men in my armed forces than are adults in your little island and you've come to invade me Minister? It was a start of a conversation. It got rather more fraught when I was reminded that it was pointless me coming and suggesting any form of military intervention because of the history of the British involvement in Northern Ireland.

I do know that story very well. Right back to the 30 years when the troops went in. What worried me, though, was that more people had been reported to have been killed and died in East Timor in the time I travelled from Leeds to Jakarta than all that had been died, maimed and bombed in that conflict over 30 years. The situation was serious; there was a need for international action.

The one thing that I managed to, as it were, at least get an agreement on as I came out of a few hours, both with the President and his ministers, was that where people have been displaced and moved to West Timor and elsewhere. But surely if people were in camps they needed food, they needed water, they needed sanitation. There was a danger of disease. Could not humanitarian aid be allowed in and ensure that people didn't die in camps. There was an assent to that idea. That, at least, was the proposition. I came back on the 10th of September, at the airport on a similar plane...

[end of first side of tape]

...no commitments to the UN going in, the history, the stories of violence, his own church completely destroyed, his priest, sisters murdered. A few days later we got the news that, in fact, the UN was going to be formally invited in as the proposition was.

I just want to underline what was said about the UN. When I was asked to comment, I learned about the UN. The UN is not one homogenous, agreed, world government sat there making decisions for us all. It's made up of the countries that make it up with conflicting and different views. We haven't yet sorted out whether there can be intervention in circumstances where human rights ought to transcend sovereignty. That row will still continue and will need to be sorted out. The United Nations doesn't have a standing army somewhere in a field waiting to be sent out. I spent nights when I got home to Leeds actually ringing round, once the decision was made, late in the night across the time barriers, to ministers in Thailand, in Singapore, and in the Philippines, to ask them to join in to build up the forces to go in to keep the peace, to construct the organisation. I think what this conflict will also reveal is the need to transform the personality of the United Nations in the 21st century.

Can I also simply say, the one thing that I also learned by not visiting Dili but simply from the images, I visited Kosovo after the conflict and visited Pristina. I went there to look at the work needed for reconstruction after the violence. I went there expecting the place to be flattened, every home to be razed to the ground, no stone to stand on stone. In fact, that wasn't the case. The roads were still there, the power station was there, a bit run down since when the Russians had moved out from it, the waterworks worked. The houses had wooden roofs but the stones were standing, the fires had caused the roofs to collapse in. The people

were moving back, they simply covered the stones over and had a place to live in. The flat blocks were still there and in three days they transformed from eyeless empty sockets to places where the washing was hung out over the balconies.

But then we looked to Dili and the stories and accounts of Dili. I was told when I was in Jakarta in that horrific, double-violent use of the expression if they want, if Xanana and the people of East Timor want East Timor then we'll let them have it. I think the phrase meant not a stone will be left on a stone. It would be scorched earth. There would be nothing for refugees to come back to, nothing to inherit. And so the work of reconstruction now really is imperative. The work of aid, development, to work through that agenda, we've done a little bit. Clare Short in her department with some funds, 5 million, 6 million pounds of some more resources to date to help build up that. And we need too much more internationally through the European Union, through the UN as well to work with you in that work of reconstruction.

I think it was in Algarve in October 1998 at a conference there, there was a great vision for the future of free East Timor. Needing, of course, mapping out public sector governance and mass communication. The need for legal and judicial systems. The need for education, health infrastructure. The whole building of civil society to enable the place to be run as a community, as a civil society, and as a nation, needs to be put back in place as traumatised people return to reconstruct their society.

In a speech that Xanana made in October when he came here recently, he said we are moving towards constructing a new government that can be support by a viable economy within its geographical setting. This is to say we are giving a priority to building democratic institutions along with developing the economy to give prosperity to the East Timorese. The democratic system we are envisioning is one that allows genuine representation where all democratic elements such as the press, non-governmental organisations also have substantial voice in the decision making process. Our vision is to build an effective administration with the minimum number of people but able to deliver the basic services that the country and the community needs and we'll pay serious attention to recruitment placement and wage systems.

I think now as East Timor moves forward, as we move from the international forces to the transitional administrations with the work of the UN, I just want to add that it's vital that the UN includes the people of East Timor and its leadership in that planning process rather than doing it for them. Do it *with* them because that enables a new society to build.

What I felt so encouraging tonight was, yes the messages of reconciliation and forgiveness because I think what we're learning about now are that there are new models of society, new models of nation-states. East Timor may well be the first not simply reconstructing and developing through their own liberation but teaching us, small though they may well be, teaching us in the rest of the world how we are not all there yet in terms of justice and democracy. We've much to learn, to build new shapes together. You mentioned the need to build something totally new and I think you were referring to architecture and structures. I think we've new systems to build, political systems, institutions for the 21st century that actually may try to ensure that we minimise the conflicts that have actually dominated the past century. And able people, yes, to live in justice and in freedom but in good relations with each other and their neighbours in the future.

And I think I just thank you for the privilege of hearing your vision tonight and just simply say on behalf of our government we will do our best, practically, to back you up with our resources here at home, but through our efforts internationally as well. Thank you.

*Paul Vallely:* Thank you John. I'm going to keep this brief now. We've got about 15 minutes for questions before we need to go over on that live line to Darwin. So I would like comments or questions, and keep them very brief please. I'll take three or four in a row and then I'll ask the speakers to comment. One here. Have we got two mikes? OK, sir.

*Q1 [unknown male]:* I haven't got very much of a background regarding East Timor. However, one of the things that I wondered following the talk that you gave us tonight, sir, was what exactly is the relationship between East and West Timor? Could you be able to describe that in a few words for us?

*Paul Vallely:* Would you like to do that now while I move the mike round a bit? Next question, the lady there with her hand up, could you move the mike there? Do we have a second roving mike? If some questioners would like to come out and ask questions at this mike here perhaps that would speed things up.

*Celia Mather:* I wanted to ask you about the relationship between the new East Timor and the pro-democracy activists of Indonesia. We've got two Indonesian labour activists here with us tonight. Their concern is, you talked about getting the military back to barracks. Their concern is how to get the military out of the factories and back to barracks. So what sort of message could you give us tonight for the Indonesian pro-democracy activists and those of us who are trying to support them.

*Paul Vallely:* Another question?

*Q3 [unknown male]:* Thank you very much for your address. I'm quite honoured to be here, to hear your speech. My question is regarding the fact that many thousands of East Timorese are still in West Timor and you speak of reconciliation with the Indonesian government. I'm wondering what ... [inaudible] ... from the new government there if you think they will hasten the safe return, speedy return. And in addition for the British government and the United Nations, and the international community ... [inaudible] ... to say a quick return of the East Timorese many of whom have been forced into West Timor.

*Paul Vallely:* Can we take one? This gentleman here.

*Q4 [unknown male]:* Can you tell me what is going to happen to the 20 per cent who did not vote for independence, or rather voted for autonomy within Indonesia? I was reading in a newspaper in this weekend, I think, before the ballot that there were at least 20 per cent. They had strongly held views about belonging to Indonesia rather than East Timor. They also seem, from the descriptions of the families that they were much richer than the average Timorese. Would they be much more active? Are they still in East Timor?

*Paul Vallely:* Thanks very much, Perhaps we could ask you to address some of those points.

*Jose Ramos Horta:* I start random as I remember the questions. I'll start with the last one.

Remember that the 20 percent or so, who voted for autonomy with Indonesia, voted in circumstances of violence, intimidation, terror campaign that went on for months. We know that if the conditions on the ground had been safer, freer, the vote for independence would be far greater, far higher. Up to 90 to 95 per cent. We did our own survey throughout the country, and we knew that if conditions were better well over 90 per cent would have voted for independence.

Prior to the ballot itself, the three judges nominated by the Secretary General, a South Korean, a South African, and a European, had written a letter to the Secretary General two weeks before, warning that if the vote went ahead, as in those circumstances, and the vote turned out to be in favour of autonomy, it would be the biggest fraud in history. Because the conditions were not there. The fact that on the day of the ballot there was no violence does not mean that violence didn't have its effect. It went on for weeks, months. And we know that if there was any fraud at all on the ballot day the fraud was in favour of autonomy.

We know we have inside information, that many of the observers, particularly Indian observers, took part in giving away votes to the pro-autonomy. The UN itself did not complain because we know that the UN was worried if the vote for independence was more than 80 per cent. So they were quite happy to leave this as it is.

Those who voted for autonomy within the region, who actually have any loyalty at all, we cannot even talk in terms of the percentage point. Because when we hear about loyalty to Indonesia, well, East Timor never had a relationship with Indonesia for centuries. You don't build loyalty with a country over a 25 year period, particularly with all that violence. So there was no loyalty come from generations, cultural affinity, religious affinity, common goals, common aspirations. That's been the history of nationhood. So there is not such thing as loyalty to Indonesia.

Those who voted for Indonesia, the leaders for instance, we know them one by one. Well, some of them are in Lisbon right now. Some of the most pro-Indonesia elements are in Lisbon. I was shocked today when I was told a certain gentleman called Mr Parada is in Portugal. Parada was the worst, the most pro-Indonesia ever. The most insulting to Portugal, the most violent in our meetings, always use verbal abuse against everybody else. He's in Portugal. The East Timorese member of the Indonesian National Commission of Human Rights, Mr Salvador Clementino Amaral, he's in Portugal. And many others.

Yes, those who were pro-Indonesia were the privileged, local elite. And they are now, basically, worried for their own safety in Indonesia. They are welcome.

As far as the relationship between East Timor and West Timor, for centuries there was no relationship what so ever. I, personally, knew West Timor very well in the 60s, early 70s. As a journalist I travelled into West Timor and what surprised me in those years was the depth of suspicion, rivalry between the people in the two sides of the border region. Those historical rivalries go back even before the arrival of the Europeans in the area. Then came the arrival of the Dutch and the Portuguese and deepened that division.

There are ethnic, obviously, ethnic relationships, there is a language relationship. The kind of Tetum spoken in West Timor, parts of West Timor, is spoken, well, by some in East Timor. We call it Tetum-Terik or more the classic Tetum, that has no mix of Portuguese or whatever.

In the future, well, as we cannot, East Timor cannot forget its geographic location, vis-à-vis Jakarta, least of all it can't forget that it shares an island with West Timor. We have to do everything possible to rebuild relations with West Timor and with the rest of Indonesia.

Indonesian people, for a long time, you know we have said the Indonesian people suffer longest the Suharto regime than East Timor, going back to '65, '66. As far as I remember the first people I knew who was supportive of an independent East Timor were Indonesians, like George Adijondro.

You know over the years I have been going to Paris almost once or twice a year, for different reasons. Only yesterday I failed to go to the Indonesian restaurant called *Restaurant Indonesie*. It is run, started by Indonesian dissidents. I failed to go there last night because I arrived from Darwin totally jetlagged. I didn't feel like going anywhere, so went to sleep. But usually I would go to chat to those people and they have been exiled for 20 years, 15 years.

Some of the Indonesian young activists have been in prison. Muchtar Pakpahan, the labour leader, was in prison partly because of East Timor. I must say, you know, I notice here the presence in the room of Carmel Budiardjo. You know Carmel has become synonymous with the struggle for democracy in Indonesia and asserting self determination for East Timor. Many of us over the years will learn about Indonesia, about the struggle there, through *Tapol Bulletin*, through numerous long hours of conversation with that tireless woman. I hope, Carmel, you will visit us one day in East Timor, soon, and receive as a hero.

*Paul Valley:* We'll give the microphone back to Carmel to speak. But while that's happening can I ask John Battle to address the question of what the international community can do about speeding up the return of people in the camps in West Timor.

*John Battle:* In a sense that that question has been right to the forefront of minds of the peacekeeping force going in. Partly the problem was the multinational force was there to guard the security of the boundaries within East Timor. And the real threat at the time, from the militia, though it has been proved more language than reality, was that there would be a force at the border who would take on the international forces and prevent them moving. That didn't actually emerge, encouragingly, which enabled contact to be made and already there are two planes a day returning to Dili from West Timor.

But there are also people scattered right across the islands, in Java and on other islands as well. Regathering together the people that were really scattered out throughout the whole of Indonesia is an immense task of communication, but of also of actually tackling, in the experience I've had of it, the fear of the people who are not sure what they're returning to or in what circumstance or conditions. And that's to be patiently worked through.

So the answer is yes, there needs to be a quick and safe return. People need to be protected and not violence and that's happening through UNAMET and others. But at the same time, I think, people need to be able to return home to something and be supported when they're at home as well. And so we have to do the two tasks of the transport back and the rebuilding for when they return from nothing.

*Paul Valley:* Is it just a question of logistics and rebuilding the confidence of the people or is there a political problem with the government of Indonesia?

*John Battle:* I think it's improving to some extent. The government of Indonesia, don't forget, has changed over night and we're not sure who the new ministers will be in the new structure. But what we're hoping is, that certainly the TNI forces will be part of ensuring the safe passage of people rather than allowing the militia to actually interfere in their safe passage, and prevent them from doing so. We were actually at that stage, I think, earlier on in the conflict.

*Paul Vallely:* Thanks very much. Carmel, would you like to say something, and then can we move the microphone over to this side and take three or four more questions before we close.

*Carmel Budiardjo* Jose, thank you for those words. I think we are in a moment of history. I had, today, we watched on television the return of Xanana Gusmao and I know, of course, that Jose would have liked to be there. To me, that was such an emotional moment, such a wonderful moment in the history of East Timor, that it really made me want to cry. Let me say that, first of all I would also like to say a warm thank you as well to the CIIR with whom we have worked very closely for so many years. It has certainly been one of the foremost organisations here in the UK that has worked throughout on the question of East Timor.

Just one other word I would like to say that I have worked for human rights and democracy in Indonesia ever since we set up Tapol in 1973, so we are 26 years. There were moments when we felt we were almost in a helpless situation. There was almost no response from Indonesia. Difficult to make contacts with anybody because there wasn't such a thing, in the 70s and the 80s, as a pro-democracy movement. I always said what was it that kept me going. It was always East Timor. Always East Timor. The courage and the resilience of the Timorese people in the worst moments of their struggle for survival.

I have to say that without that I don't think I could have passed through all these years. And I say this with total and absolute honesty. Many, many times it was East Timor that kept me going. I love you very much East Timor.

*Paul Vallely:* We'll take three more brief questions, very brief please. There's a hand at the back there and then we'll ask our speakers to respond briefly and then we'll wind up. We haven't got much time, Sir.

*Q5 [unknown male]:* Thank you Minister Ramos. As a Latin American citizen I have to say that what you have said today reminds me very much what the Sandinistas were saying when they took power from Bautista. They too suffer a lot with massacres and tens of thousands of people were killed during a long period.

*Paul Vallely:* Could I ask you to come to your point quickly. I'm sorry, we haven't much time.

*Q5 [unknown male]:* Yes indeed. I understand that Britain is one of major arms exporters in the world and today we have learned that there are SAS members helping the police in Colombia to fight drug trafficking. So what I would like to ask you is if you are going to ask the British government to help your government to build up your armed forces, considering what you said at the very beginning of your speech that the UNIFET [INTERFET], or whatever is the name of the United Nation's force, will have to leave one day East Timor.

*Paul Vallely:* Thanks very much. Can I take two more questions please? There were hands there in that area. No. Elsewhere? One more question here and we'll wind up. Gentleman there.

*Q6 [unknown male]:* Following on from that last question, for John Battle. Will the British government continue, in the future, will they be, will the British army be, providing training to the Indonesian army as they have in the past?

*Paul Vallely:* Thanks. And the final question there.

*Q7 [unknown female]:* Well my question is about the arms trade. We've had a very positive talk about the future of East Timor but what ... [inaudible] ... the arms trade ... [inaudible].

*Paul Vallely:* OK, John, I'll ask you to respond first.

*John Battle:* OK, On the arms trade, let's say, to Indonesia, we campaigned very hard immediately to get an arms embargo on as quickly as we could. We pushed that in the European Union. There's an arms embargo now on Indonesia. It's there and it's holding.

Let's then, perhaps, look at a wider perspective. It was, I thought, a very interesting question that was asked, what happens if East Timor goes independent and then asks us to support them building up security forces? That's exactly what happened when President Mandela asked for support in building up forces in South Africa.

Now there are two views on that. One is that those that believe there should be no armed forces and have a pacifist view that you can perhaps survive without them. That's one honourable, respectable position. But I think I'd rather say that the context, at the moment, is, within the UN, that countries have the right to legitimate protection of their borders and self-defence. In that context you have to make real judgements about whom then you allow arms permits to be given to.

I'd simply say this, at the present time, training to armed forces and to police in Indonesia has stopped. It's not happening now. No new arms have gone to Indonesia in recent times. The jets that were referred to, during the conflict, were sold by the last administration and we'd a hell of a job unpacking that to prevent it even deliveries that had been ordered years before that were actually parked on tarmac in Malaysia going through to them. But although that was not easy, but was done.

The question then arises that if there are political changes in countries that don't remain the same, move towards democracy, that themselves request can they defend their territorial borders? Then you've real challenges to face. If East Timor were to come to us and ask would we help train, as they are doing now, with policing for civil order, then the answer actually is yes, we'll work with you to provide civil order. I think I could see then that is it were a case of saying can we protect our borders, there could be a legitimate case for saying yes, a society, a country, a nation has a right to protect its borders and to use assistance to do it.

*Paul Vallely:* Thanks. Jose Ramos Horta, will you be rebuilding, or building an army?

*Jose Ramos Horta:* Let me tell you something. For many years I campaigned within the Resistance for an independent East Timor without an army. And succeeded. Including the FALINTIL people, the armed guerrillas agreed with it. Xanana, everybody agreed. Then came the violence in August.

I tell you, you might have heard of Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica, Nobel Peace Laureate, who is very much involved in getting countries to get rid of their armies. Like Costa Rica. I was talking with him about holding a meeting in December, in Dili, of several Nobel Laureates to launch our non-army initiative. I tell you I haven't talked to Oscar Arias since. If he phones me to remind me of that idea I say no, don't Oscar, I no longer agree with that. Frankly I have to tell you never again someone will dare to invade East Timor without a price, a heavy price.

When I think of the Jew's Holocaust, of the many millions of Jews slaughtered with absolute impunity, and they say never again. I understand why. Never again anyone will invade East Timor without paying a price. I no longer argue for a non-army, sorry.

What kind of army, what kind of defence structure we're going to have, what kind of military doctrine, that's a question we're going to debate in the next few weeks. Even Bishop Belo no longer agrees with me about not having an army. That is the dramatic, traumatic experience nations have. Subject to war, to violence, invaded, annexed. And they say, assuming I still believe in it, personally I still believe in it, who am I going to persuade in East Timor. Not one single person. Not even Bishop Belo would agree with me.

*Paul Vallely:* John Battle and Jose Ramos Horta. I'd like to thank you for being so frank and sharing with us some of the rawness and the immediacy of these real decisions that face people in this very complicated situation. We could talk all night about it. There'd be lots to say but, I think, for now we would just like to offer our support to you for the continuing struggle you face and to gratefully accept your offer of being a watchdog for the interest of the poor people of Indonesia in the years to come. Thank you very much.